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Weber Named EIU's Vice President for Business Affairs

Mar-23-2009

Although William Weber has spent the better part of the past two decades dealing with academic issues facing Eastern Illinois University, he feels confident about his abilities to perform the duties of vice president for business affairs.

He will assume the role of VPBA on July 1, according to EIU President Bill Perry, who publicly announced the appointment today.

"If you look at my past work, you'll see that I've always been involved with issues tied to the business services of the university, including the budget, payroll and human resources," Weber said.

Weber was chosen from nearly 40 applicants in a national search that began after Jeff Cooley, who served as vice president for business affairs since 1999, announced his Dec. 31, 2008, retirement. EIU Treasurer Paul McCann is serving as interim VPBA until Weber takes office.

The VPBA reports to the president and serves on the President's Council and as treasurer of Eastern's Board of Trustees. After assuming the post, Weber will be responsible for the supervision, coordination and administration of the Budget Office, Business Services, Information Technology Services, Human Resources, Facilities Planning and Management, Environmental Health and Safety, Records Management, and the broad areas of service related to these units.

As he prepares to take office, Weber's mind is primarily focused on his top two priorities: A renewable energy center to replace the university's failing power plant and an overall budget that will continue to require tight management and careful scrutiny.

Weber is optimistic that progress will already have been made toward the construction of an energy center by July 1.

"The effort that has already been put forward toward this project is quite impressive," he said, commending the collective work of McCann; President Perry; Jill Nilsen, vice president for external relations; and Illinois Sen. Dale Righter and Ill. Rep. Chapin Rose, in seeking funding sources and legislative support for the much-needed project.

Weber also plans to direct his focus on helping the president achieve the goals he has set.

"Five to 10 years from now, I'd liked for us to be able to look back and say that Eastern is recognized as being the best in the nation at integrating the academic and personal development of our students. And I'd like it to be said that the Business Affairs division has been an active participant in achieving that goal," Weber said.

While it is not an easily attainable goal, he added, it is one that offers a very clear direction for the university. "I really find it to be an exciting initiative of President Perry's," Weber said.

The coming months will also see the new vice president in conversation with his staff regarding cost savings.

"We've frequently heard the president say that every dollar in cost savings we can achieve is one less dollar we have to charge in tuition," Weber said. "This is one of the primary ways that Business Affairs can help achieve President Perry's goal for the university."

Additionally, Weber would like to see more collaboration between university departments -- especially in areas that cross vice presidential lines.

"For example, I think Business Affairs can be a rich source of possible experiential learning opportunities for our students," he said. Models already at work include graduate assistantships for students working in Eastern's Budget Office and Human Resources department, and geography/geology majors working hand-in-hand with Facilities Planning and Management to meet the university's mapping needs.

Weber earned his doctorate in economics from the University of Kansas in 1985. Following a post-doctorate appointment at Dartmouth College and a faculty appointment at Illinois State University, he joined Eastern's faculty in 1988 and was promoted to the rank of professor in 1995. His work has been published in a number of edited volumes and journals, including the *Journal of Economic Education*, *Public Finance Review* and the *Journal of Economics*.

During his career at Eastern, Weber served as director of the Office for Economic Education, treasurer and vice president of the EIU chapter of the University Professionals of Illinois Local 4100, and associate dean of the College of Sciences, before moving into his present position of associate vice president for Academic Affairs and director of Summer Sessions. He has also been serving as Eastern's interim budget director since December 2007.

He lives in Charleston with his partner Robert Funk, who is a professor emeritus of English from Eastern.



William Weber

